## *TO THE HONOURABLE THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:*

Your Petitioners are of opinion that the Temperance Acts now in force are not sufficient to suppress intemperance, and that this object can be more effectually accomplished by enactments striking at the root of the evil than by indiscriminate prohibition whether of a local or a general character.

They think that in dealing with this question two things must be held in view, viz.: That no repressive legislation will be effectual unless it is heartily supported by a large majority of the people; and that the main cause of intemperance is the use of ardent spirits as a beverage.

They think that none of the Acts heretofore passed have been sufficiently governed by these considerations, and that the Canada Temperance or Scott Act is particularly defective in not providing restraints in localities where it is not in force, and which are therefore left to the operation of an unsatisfactory License Act, and in permitting liquors, not uncommonly of the worst description, to be introduced and consumed without inspection or safeguards of any kind.

Besides the imperfections in the Scott Act, and the possibility of its being declared to be *ultra vires* or unconstitutional, there are many difficulties in the way of its being universally adopted and faithfully carried out, which therefore mar its usefulness, among which the following may be enumerated:—

That it may be carried by a majority of the votes cast and without a majority of the electors, which is not enough in the case of a sumptuary law to ensure success;

That it is easily susceptible of fraudulent evasion, especially in towns and cities where a stringent liquor law is most needed; and, as a matter of fact, is scandalously evaded in many localities;

That its tendency is to make spirits the sole beverage of those who will drink, and to promote the production of impure and poisonous compounds;

That it involves the loss of an enormous amount of revenue, which must be made up by some other tax, and that the burden of this tax would fall as well on those who are not subject to the Act as those who are;

That it also involves the loss of business and means of livelihood to a great many persons besides those who are actually engaged in the manufacture and sale of liquors; and entails the important question of Compensation, which, if conceded, should properly fall on the municipalities adopting the Act;

That it would seriously affect our agricultural interests by shutting up or curtailing the home market for barley and native wines, which are even now important items in our national wealth;

That if the law is found impracticable in any locality which has adopted it, it cannot be repealed under three years, which involves very serious consequences;

That it is a law for the poor man who cannot import his own liquors where the Act is in force as the rich man can;

That the time when the Scott Act will be submitted in any locality being left undetermined, industries and commercial interests are in the meantime kept in a state of suspense and confusion, of which the state of things in Toronto is at present a signal example;

And that besides there are the chances of a serious reaction if the experiment of prohibition should prove a failure, or the Act should be found unconstitutional.

Under all these circumstances, and especially as a large proportion of the people and amongst them many of our best and ablest citizens think that absolute prohibition is impracti-

cable your Petitioners are of opinion that it is desirable that Parliament should pass some general measure, applicable at once to the whole country, capable of being effectually enforced, and putting an end to the use of ardent spirits as a beverage, which is believed to be the real root of the evil.

They are also of opinion that the interest of temperance and public health would be promoted by a Government inspection of all liquors in order to prevent the possibility of noxious adulteration.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that no legislation may take place this year, and that a general Act may be passed embodying the views of your petitioners.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

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